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Partisan Federalism and Subnational Governments' International Engagements: Insights from India

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This article situates the international activities of subnational governments in India within the broader political economy of federalism. It argues that the nature and the extent of subnational states' engagements in international affairs are a function of the partisan political relationship the state incumbents have with the national incumbents. The article takes a mixed methods approach. An analysis of 1,153 episodes of international engagements of India's states from 1996 to 2017 reveals that shifts in foreign policy engagement of selected state governments primarily reflect alterations in the subnational incumbents' political affiliation with the Union government. Several qualitative case studies shed light on how the central government's inclusion of subnational governments' perspectives and representatives in foreign affairs is highly partisan and profoundly political. Therefore, the Indian case reveals how subnational diplomatic interactions merge domestic and international politics.

Since the 1980s, subnational governments (SNGs) across the globe have intensified their international engagements. Yet, within single nation states, the intensity of SNGs' international engagements—termed paradiplomacy—varies considerably. In the United States, for instance, California with its two internationally active cities—San Francisco and Los Angeles—is an explicit case of paradiplomacy going its own way (Poulos 2017). In Brazil, São Paulo state stands out in terms of both the institutionalization of its paradiplomacy and sheer activism. In Russia, the North-Western regions are known to exhibit much greater international activity (Kaliningrad being the most vigorous actor of international cooperation) than the North Caucasian or the Far Eastern regions. Guangdong Province in China tends to exercise relatively high levels of foreign policy activism. Similarly, Flanders

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region in Belgium and Quebec in Canada have been most active in international engagements. In the literature, there is a consensus that the conjunction of liberalization and democratization, with globalization as a facilitator, has enhanced the opportunities for subnational governments' international engagements (Aldecoa and Keating 1999; Michelmann and Soldatos 1990; Plagemann and Destradi 2015; Schiavon 2018), and a number of comparative empirical studies on western states exist (Duchacek 1984; Hocking 1986; Requejo 2011). Yet, there is much less evidence of the determinants of regional variations in international engagement within a particular country case, especially in countries from the global south. This article aims to fill this void using India as a case study.

India has a democratic, formally federal constitution, according to which state governments are popularly elected, but are not assigned any authority in foreign affairs. As Bhaumik (2016) points out, the central government is supposed to take into account states' interests in its foreign policy, especially vis-à-vis neighbouring countries, while state governments are supposed to keep in mind the "national interest". Although there is neither a constitutional provision on states' international engagements nor any institutional mechanism to resolve center–state differences on foreign policy issues, Indian states have become increasingly active international players. This has happened as a consequence of the liberalization reforms beginning in 1991 (Kennedy 2013) as well as of the growing importance of state-level politics after the formation of regionalized coalition governments at the center since 1996 (Yadav and Palshikar 2008). SNGs engage in the international arena to attract foreign direct investment, forge links with foreign national and subnational governments, and modulate or even challenge the central government's foreign policy stances (Dossani and Vijaykumar 2005; Jacob 2016; Jain and Maini 2017; Sridharan 2003). Since 2014, a States Division in India's Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) serves as an acknowledgement of such greater activism on the part of the central government. Yet, as Jenkins (2003, 73) highlights, India's central government still effectively "curtails the diplomatic autonomy of state governments." Hence, the role of Indian states in economic diplomacy or their potential for independent international action should not be overstated.

This is where our contribution sets in. Overall, Indian SNGs' international engagements have not taken place in an even manner. How can we explain differences in the degree of international engagement of SNGs? After discussing the state of the art, we develop a framework to explain sub-state diplomatic interactions. We use conceptual tools from theories of federalism (Elazar 1987; Hooghe et al. 2016; Watts 2000) and institutional analysis (North 1991; Tsebelis 2000). Moreover, we draw on comparative empirical studies on paradiplomacy (Duchacek 1984; Hocking 1986; Kaiser 2005; Michelmann and Soldatos 1990; Paquin and LaChappelle 2005; Requejo 2011). Our main theoretical focus is on the

partisan relationships and the power struggles between central and state governments over international issues.

In our empirical analysis, we adopt a mixed methods approach. After presenting our data regarding Indian states' foreign engagements, we undertake a cross-sectional and longitudinal analyses to shed light on the determinants of Indian states' foreign relations and explain spatial as well as temporal variation. Temporal variations can be studied against the backdrop of vacillating relationships between the center and the states over time. Our analysis focuses on the years 1996–2017. After a phase of extreme centralization, in the 1990s the liberalization of the economy and the pluralization of the Indian party system contributed to a de facto diffusion of political power, leading to a more decentralized form of federalism. After 2014 however, the balance of power has shifted once more toward the center under the first BJP-led government (2014–2019), which did not depend on regional coalition partners.[1] Yet, different subnational units have continued to assert their role in foreign affairs, even though their scope of international action has not expanded to the extent expected after the ascent of Prime Minister Modi—a former Chief Minister of the state of Gujarat, who despite his party's comfortable majority in the lower house of parliament, repeatedly declared that India's states had an important role to play in foreign affairs (Jacob 2016, 3). As evident from the description of states' international engagements documented in the Online Appendix, the initial rise in state governments' international action was not maintained beyond 2015.

We argue that in India, the extent and nature of international engagement of a particular SNG is contingent upon its economic status, on the one hand, and its political relation with the ruling party at the center, on the other. Hence, in our empirical analysis, we study how regional variations in international engagements during a particular period are influenced by these two variables—the huge regional economic disparities and the tendency of the central governments in Indian politics to deal with states based on their political leanings or affiliation of the Chief Ministers (Sharma 2017b). The quantitative analysis is followed by a qualitative discussion of selected cases, which enables us to identify some of the processes and mechanisms leading to variation in SNGs' international engagements. This qualitative analysis helps us to further theorize the nexus between partisan federalism and SNGs' international engagements.

We find that shifts in state governments' foreign engagements primarily reflect alterations in their political affiliation with the Union government. Not surprisingly, regional parties were in a better position to influence national policy making during the coalition era in Indian politics (1996–2013) than during the time periods in which one party could potentially govern without alliance partners. The central government's inclusion of subnational governments in foreign affairs is also highly partisan and profoundly political. In sum, the Indian case shows that

subnational diplomatic interactions merge domestic and international politics, with domestic rationales typically prevailing over international ones.

Subnational Foreign Policy Activism: State of the Art

The literature on paradiplomacy primarily addresses the causes of the phenomenon. It identifies two sets of drivers of paradiplomacy, one external and the other internal: First, globalization has brought about the very opportunities for sub-state diplomacy to flourish. International competition over foreign direct investments (FDI) but also the facilitation of transnational interactions and a growth in diaspora contacts have created a set of incentives for subnational executives to engage in diplomatic activities. Additionally, the development of regional multilateral institutions, in Europe in particular, has provided for institutional mechanisms and, more generally, for a favourable political context for paradiplomacy (Cornago 2018, 1458). Second and domestically, economic liberalization, often combined with democratization and decentralization reforms throughout the 1990s and beyond, provided the autonomy needed for paradiplomacy to thrive (Schiavon 2018; Sridharan 2003). According to some, the resurgence of identity politics as a response to globalization's homogenizing tendencies encouraged subnational political entities to cultivate their respective regional specificities, including through paradiplomatic activities like cultural exchange with ethnic kin regions or nation states abroad (see Plagemann and Destradi 2015, 730).

However, the literature is much less clear about the causes for *variation* of federal units' foreign engagements within individual nation-states. This is so despite the fact that virtually all federations exhibit a considerable degree of variation in terms of their constituents' paradiplomatic scope, motives, and effectiveness. Given the heterogeneity of subnational states within large federations, variation in paradiplomatic activities should not be surprising. For one, the literature on subnational diplomacy tends to underline economic motives (Aldecoa and Keating 1999, vi). Subnational states with a strong manufacturing base, history of foreign trade relations, or vibrant business communities are more likely to engage in economic diplomacy than less economically developed states—typically, they also possess stronger administrative capacities, a key precondition (Antholis 2013). For instance, Conlan et al. (2004) found that the considerable variation in U.S. state assemblies' international legislative activity was explained primarily by the degree of state involvement in the international economy. In the rich world, these are also states that may engage in development cooperation. Conversely, subnational states with a history as development aid recipients may engage in paradiplomacy in order to attract foreign aid (Salomón 2012, 275). Moreover, subnational governments of states with strong diaspora communities, which

provide for essential remittances in some cases, may have both political and economic incentives to lobby the center in matters regarding bilateral relations with diaspora host countries as well as to directly cultivate relations with them (Schiavon 2018, 199–200; Totoricagüena 2005).

Likewise, subnational states with international borders will have more reasons and opportunities to engage with foreign neighbours as compared to landlocked subnational units (McMillan 2008, 244). And subnational states with close ethnic, language, or cultural ties to foreign countries or regions can be expected to be more internationally active than others. According to Cantir, this is particularly pronounced with those subnational governments dissatisfied with the center's "offer for the region's powers and tools for identity projection" (Cantir 2020, 2; also see Aldecoa and Keating 1999). In fact, irrespective of transnational kin relationships, subnational entities with aspirations for greater autonomy may find paradiplomacy an attractive "expression of an identity distinct from the one projected by the central state" (Lecours 2008, 3). For instance, in South Africa—where the dominant African National Congress has used its authority over foreign affairs to thwart provincial governments' international engagement—the province of Western Cape, controlled by the opposition Democratic Alliance since 2009, has implemented several innovations in the management of sub-state diplomacy, effectively circumventing the institutional constraints to paradiplomacy (Nganje 2014). Finally, some studies suggest that the individual character of subnational leaders, their personal interests in foreign affairs, and their national aspirations were the most important predictors of foreign policy activism (McMillan 2008, 244; Kincaid 1990). Vivid examples include Bavaria's Franz Josef Strauß and, indeed, PM Modi's tenures as Chief Minister in Gujarat from October 2001 to May 2014 (Wyatt 2017, 118).

Considering the scattered literature on the causes for variation within federations, the case of India supports several of the expectations regarding the motives for paradiplomatic engagements above. As we will later discuss in greater detail, economically developed states with a history of foreign trade, such as Gujarat or Maharashtra, are the most visible in economic diplomacy. At the same time, the border states of Punjab, West Bengal, and Tamil Nadu, have each in its own way put an imprint on India's bilateral relations with Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka, respectively (Plagemann and Destradi 2015). Kerala, in turn, with its large diaspora community in the Middle East, has exhibited a keen interest in New Delhi's relations with Saudi Arabia and other Gulf states. Yet, there is also contradictory evidence. Although a large and economically relatively developed state, West Bengal's interest in paradiplomacy beyond a few core issues related to Indo-Bangladeshi relations has been miniscule. Likewise, Tamil Nadu's Chief Minister J. Jayalalithaa was, according to one analysis, diplomatically "reactive" (Wyatt 2017, 118). And the Northeastern states, despite both being potential

beneficiaries of closer economic relations to neighboring Bangladesh, Myanmar, and even China, and despite their cultural affinity to Southeast Asia (and distance from India's mainland), have not yet emerged as paradiplomatic actors.

One possible way to make sense of such contradictions, as well as of the ebb and flow of activities over time outlined in more detail below, is to focus on the *political* relations between state governments and the central government. In countries like India, where subnational, state-based parties assert themselves nationally by entering into coalition governments at the center, partisan politics play a crucial role in shaping their international engagement.[2] Here, those state-based parties with a prospect for national power may be induced to develop some foreign policy competency (Sridharan 2003, 468–470), with potential repercussions for their home state's foreign engagements. And once part of a national coalition, new opportunities arise, as for instance in channelling FDI or aid towards the home state (Jenkins 2003, 71–72).

It is therefore helpful to connect the literature on subnational diplomacy with the one on partisanship and foreign policy. In the realist tradition of International Relations, foreign policy has been considered a domain in which partisan positions and party ideologies hardly matter: "politics stop at the water's edge" and partisan differences tend to be overcome in the name of an objectively given "national interest." Yet, liberal approaches and the Foreign Policy Analysis literature highlight that states are not "black boxes" and that domestic actors play a crucial role in defining what constitutes the national interest. Political parties are key actors in this regard (Rathbun 2004; Calin 2010). In parliamentary systems, political parties have even greater opportunities to translate their positions into foreign policies (Rathbun 2004, 3). Generally speaking, leftist parties tend to pursue a more inclusive foreign policy, to be sceptical of military interventions, and to be open to multilateralism (ibid.: 2–3). In contrast, democratic countries governed by right-of-center parties are more likely to initiate military conflicts than those with left-of-center parties in government (for an overview see Calin 2010, 56–62).[3] At the same time, the literature on party ideologies also includes evidence suggesting a more fluid and less conclusive impact of party ideologies on foreign policy (e.g., Cronin and Fordham 1999). For example, changes in parties' voter bases or in access to executive power (Lewis 2017) can reshape political parties' foreign policy positions over time.

Another strand in the Foreign Policy Analysis literature assesses the impact of coalition settings (single party versus coalition governments) on foreign policy. Yet, findings are inconclusive, and it remains unclear whether coalition governments will be more restrained as well as constrained in their engagement due to their inherent checks and balances (e.g., Maoz and Russett 1993, 626), or more aggressive because the parties involved become less accountable when they form part of a coalition (e.g., Prins and Sprecher 2016) or because of the

disproportionate influence of small coalition partners. More recent research points out that coalition governments are not inherently more aggressive or peaceful, but that they do engage in more "extreme" foreign policy behavior (Kaarbo and Beasley 2008). Yet, how partisan politics and the setup of governing coalitions play out when it comes to explaining *subnational* governments' foreign engagements has been largely ignored, both in the literature on paradiplomacy and federalism as well as in the literature on Foreign Policy Analysis.

Center–State Partisan Political Relationships and their Impact on Subnational Governments' International Engagements

The national government and subnational actors (states) can interact in shaping a country's foreign policy in several ways. At one extreme, full control of the central government corresponds with a classic understanding of foreign policy as "high politics" including the core tasks of defending national security, state sovereignty, and of pursuing the "national interest" (Shaw 2017). In most federations, the conduct of foreign affairs, including treaty-making power, is an unfettered function of the national government. In such systems, there is the problem of how "the power of the general [sic] government in foreign affairs, whatever its extent may be, is to be so controlled that in its exercise the divergent interests of the component regions in the federation shall be duly safeguarded" (Wheare 1970, 183).

At the other extreme of the continuum, we have a fully independent foreign policy making on the part of subnational states, an ideal-type to be found in practice only when it comes to minor issues concerning foreign relations such as city partnership agreements. The Belgian constitution, which explicitly grants subnational units the competence to conclude international agreements, if not to conduct foreign affairs per se, clearly is an exception. In such a decentralized system, every player has a veto and the component regions might challenge the legal limits of federal power in foreign affairs, harming the latter's international image (Scharpf 1988).

In a federal context without such constitutional provisions, center–state interactions on foreign policy issues are all about striking a balance between national and subnational preferences. As suggested by the literature on party politics and foreign policy outlined above, political parties play a crucial role in the formation of such foreign policy preferences. Moreover, given the potentially diverging interests between the national and the state levels, conflict between the center and the states on foreign policy issues is always a possibility. Indeed, such tensions and conflicts are at the heart of the early literature on sub-state diplomacy (Duchacek 1984; Kincaid 1990; Michelmann and Soldatos 1990; Aldecoa and Keating 1999). A variety of single case and small-n comparative works uncovered

examples of both conflictive and cooperative relations. For instance, the intensification in Mexican SNGs' foreign relations throughout the 2000s is described as "complementary" to the activities of the central government, "without any visible conflict between the levels of government" (Schiavon 2018, 1665). India, as will be seen below, is located more toward the other end of the spectrum, with a substantial and increasing number of cases of inter-governmental conflict over subnational states' foreign relations.

Whereas consensus building (or conflict resolution) between the center and states entails accommodation and concessions by all interacting parties (Kincaid 1990), the outcome of such processes eventually depends on a state government's ability to make its voice heard with the central government. When common institutions or legal frameworks that guarantee participation of both levels of government in foreign policy making are absent, individual states' political bargaining powers vis-à-vis the center determine the extent to which the latter can pursue their own foreign relations. The more political weight regional parties or regional affiliates of national parties have at the center, the more we may expect subnational preferences to affect the center's foreign policy. By contrast, an exclusively national approach to foreign policy making is more likely under a one-party-majority government than under coalition governments: in the latter, the actions of the formateur (the leading party in the national coalition) are restrained by a higher number of partisan veto players.

We therefore hypothesize that the essential explanatory variable is the political relationship that a state government has with the central government, as this can be expected to determine its bargaining power vis-à-vis the center on foreign policy issues. States can be (a) affiliated, if they are governed by the same party as the central government (or, more precisely for the Indian case, if the Chief Minister shares the same political affiliation as the Prime Minister); (b) aligned, if they are governed by a party that belongs to the governing coalition at the center (or, for the Indian case, if the Chief Minister belongs to one of the coalition parties at the center); (c) ruled by outside supporters' parties, if they are governed by a party that externally supports a minority government at the center; or (d) opposition states, if they are ruled by a party that belongs to the opposition at the center.

While comparing states, we not only contrast opposition states with the rest, i.e., "d" versus the rest, but also affiliated states with non-affiliated ones, i.e., "a" versus the rest. The second type of comparison is required because under certain circumstances, representatives of the largest party are found to discriminate even against states where junior coalition members are in power (Rodden and Wilkinson 2005).

India's Center–State Relations and SNG's International Engagements: Quantitative Analysis

In this section, we study 1153 episodes of international engagements of Indian states over a span of twenty-one years. We coded the following activities as subnational international engagement: (a) meetings between Chief Ministers and representatives of foreign governments; (b) meetings between state government representatives and foreign business leaders; (c) meetings between state government representatives and regional high commissioners; (d) visits by state-level ministers to other countries to attract investments or attend international summits; (e) attempts by state governments to influence or oppose the national government's foreign policies or to pressurize the central government on international issue; (f) interaction of the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank with SNGs. We selected all reported episodes mentioned during the sampling time frame of about twenty-one years (May 1996–December 2017) in the English language national newspapers/magazines *The Times of India*, *The Indian Express*, *The Hindu*, *India Today, and Business Standard* (and the respective online archives) and further scanned other regional, national, and international news media (see Online Appendix for a complete list) as well as reports by the MEA to obtain rich data on the subject. After the May 1996 elections, India entered into a phase of multi-party coalitions while the process of economic liberalization gained momentum. It was in mid 1990s that the international lending agencies such as the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank shifted their focus to the subnational level. It is around this period that the chief ministers began to go abroad more frequently than ever before to market their respective states and woo investors. Thus, from 1996 onwards, the 'interaction' between liberalization of the Indian economy and the pluralization of the Indian polity ensued.

Figure 1 shows period-wise episodes of SNGs' international actions. Since the beginning of the coalition era in 1996, such instances have increased across all successive governments. Figure 2 confirms the same while demonstrating that the phenomenon has become more entrenched since 2010. It also shows dips in activity during election years, which simply means that Chief Ministers generally avoid undertaking international engagements, being focused on elections at home. In a clear vindication of this finding, Prime Minister Modi—in the run-up to the 2019 elections—advised the BJP Chief Ministers to focus on governance and avoid foreign visits till elections are over (The Hindustan Times 2018). Furthermore, in the months immediately following elections, the dip also implies that new coalitions need to be formed in the first place in order to allow for foreign policy activism of states.

It is only natural that with a rise of paradiplomatic activity also comes conflict. Thus, we also coded the activities involving center–state conflict on foreign policy

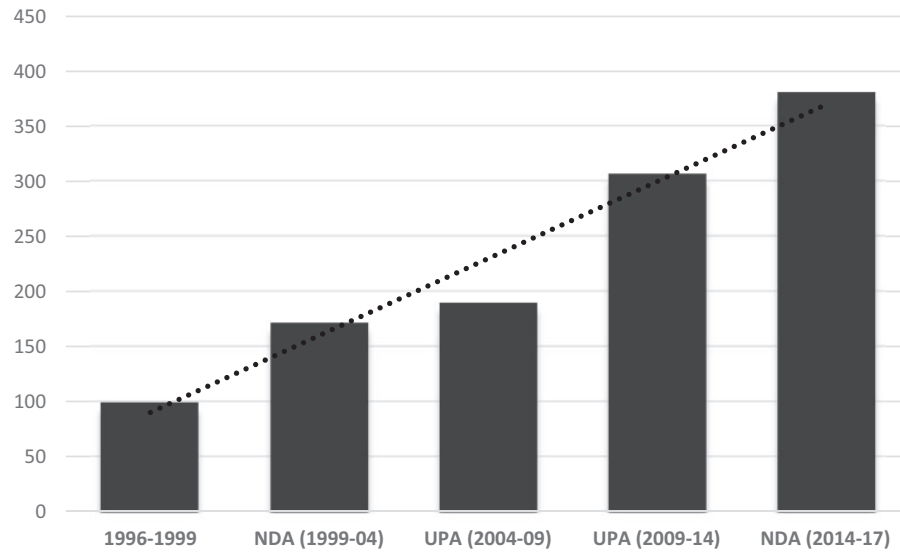

Figure 1 Instances of subnational international action in India by government (1996–2017).

Note: During the term of the 11th Lok Sabha (22 May 1996–04 December 1997) India had three prime ministers—A. B. Vajpayee (1996), H D Deve Gowda (1996–1997), and I. K. Gujral (1997–1998). The Twelfth Lok Sabha (23 March 1998–26 April 1999) also yielded a weak coalition government led by the BJP which turned out to be short-lived. From thirteenth Lok Sabha (20 October 1999–06 February 2004) onwards, India entered into a phase of stable coalitions.

issues, either as the central government trying to block a particular state's initiative, or state government(s) trying to resist the central government's policies. As Figure 3 reveals, we find that the nature of conflict on foreign policy issues shows contrasting patterns based on whether the central government is a coalition without a party enjoying an absolute majority (the National Democratic Alliance, NDA, and United Progressive Alliance, UPA, governments from 1999 until 2014) or one characterized by a single-party majority (of the Bharatiya Janata Party, BJP, in the NDA government formed in 2014). During the coalition era, subnational governments dominated center–state interaction over issues related to international engagements; since 2014, under the BJP majority government, the center has been more influential, sometimes even blocking state governments' attempts to enhance their international exposure and engagement.

For purposes of regression analysis, we focus on the coalition era (1996–2013). Our study is based on a sample of 14 major states of India, accounting for more than 90 percent of all India population. The summary statistics have been reported in table 1. During this period, we observe the international engagement of four groups of Chief Ministers (CM): CMs belonging to the PM's party CM_{affil}, CMs

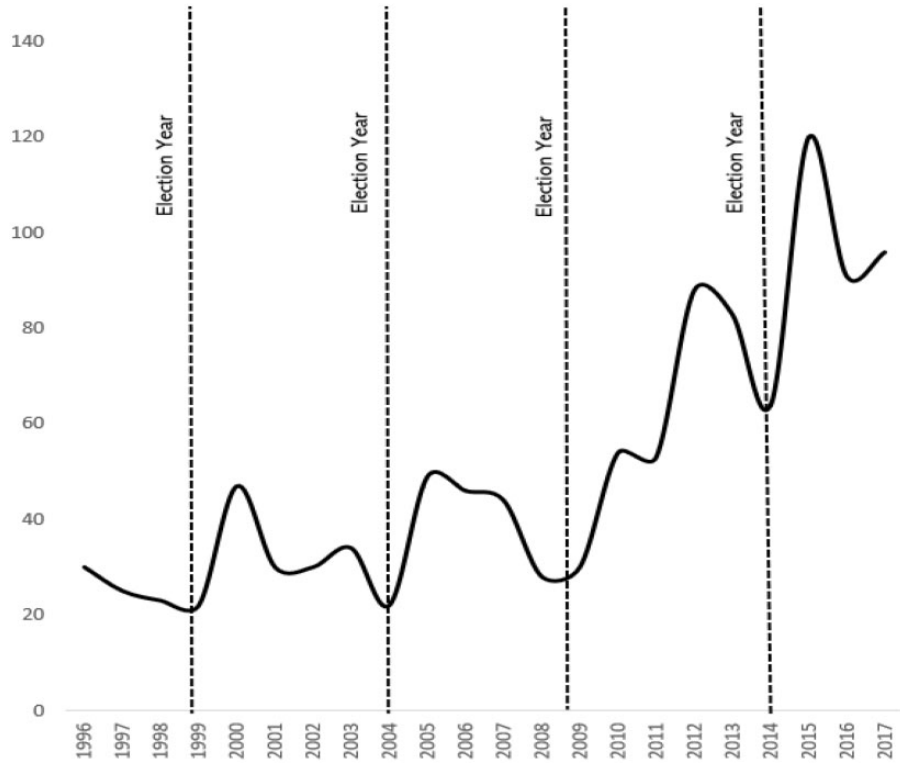

Figure 2 Instances of subnational international action in India on yearly basis (1996–2017).

belonging to the coalition partner's party CM_{align}, CMs belonging to the outside supporters' party CM_{osp}, and CMs belonging to the opposition party CM_{opp}.

We hypothesize that states that undertake international action without incurring center–state conflict will be those in which the CM shares the party affiliation of the PM. All other categories (coalition partners, outside supporters, and opposition-party Chief Ministers), collectively termed as non-affiliated, would have incentives to oppose the Prime Minister's party's preferred position on foreign policy issues. At that point, the center can decide whether to acknowledge states' concerns or ignore them. Overall, the PM's party will be willing to support the states it rules far more than the non-affiliated ones. Moreover, the center is more likely to take regional concerns seriously when a given Chief Minister's party is crucial to the stability and survival of the government at the center. Our hypothesis has two testable predictions:

> H1: Center–state cooperation on international engagement of a subnational government is more likely when that government belongs to the Prime Minister's political party.

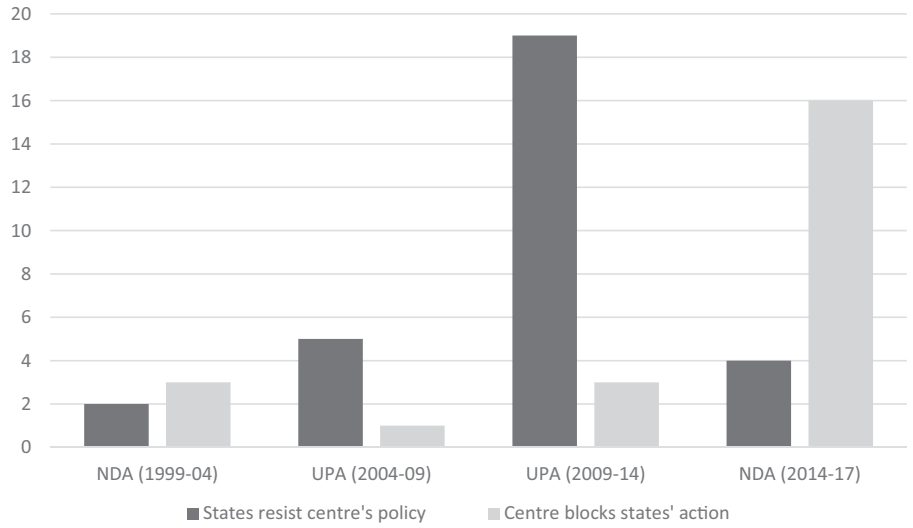

Figure 3 Center–state antagonism over foreign policy issues (1999–2017).

Note: The "two national alliances" system comprising the NDA and the UPA began in 1999.

Table 1 Summary statistics

Variable		Observations	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
Year		252	—	—	1996	2013
Paradiplomatic activity	*Cooperation*	252	2.900794	3.629516	0	34
	Conflict	252	0.1269841	0.4460384	0	05
Population		252	69300000	40000000	18900000	210000000
NSDP (log)		252	28.04271	0.590452	26.73478	29.71744
Per capita NSDP (log)		252	10.13856	0.505315	8.855771	11.14327
Rural Population (log)		252	17.54035	0.605883	16.42881	18.88294
Election Year		252	0.353175	0.478908	0	1
CM (4 groups: Affiliated, aligned, outside supporter, opposition)		252	2.572581	1.027346	1	4
CM Not affiliated (dummy)		252	0.757937	0.429185	0	1
CM Opposition (dummy)		252	0.496032	0.500979	0	1

H2: Center–state conflict on international engagement of a subnational government is more likely when that government belongs to a non-affiliated party.

While modelling the impact of political variables on the extent and magnitude of Indian states' paradiplomatic activities, we control for income levels, rural

population, and election years. High-income states can be expected to be more confident about engaging in international action (for example Gujarat and Maharashtra in India), whereas there may be less public support for such action in predominantly rural and agrarian states (for example Odisha and Bihar in India). However, during election years, Chief Ministers generally focus on domestic politics more than their international engagements.

Overall, the general functional form of the models can be presented as:

$$SNG^{'}s\ \ international\ \ action\ _{it} = C_i + \beta_1 Income_{it} + \beta_2 Rural_{it} + \beta_3 Elect\ \ yr_{it} + \beta_4 POL\ \ var_{it} + \ \varepsilon_{it}$$

Where $SNG^{'}s\ \ international\ \ action$ is the frequency of international engagement of the i_{th} state during the t-th year; $Income_{it}$ represents the income level; $Rural_{it}$ represents the predominantly rural economy or lack of urbanisation; $Elect\ \ yr_{it}$ represents the election year; $POl\ \ var_{it}$ represents the political explanatory variables (especially Chief Minister's party affiliation) of the i-th state during the t-th period of time; $\beta_1,\ \beta_2,\ \beta_3,\ and\ \beta_4$ are corresponding coefficients of the given variables; $C_i$represents the state-specific individual effects; and ε_{it} is the error term.

The results of multiple linear regression reported in table 2 reveal a statistically significant probability of conflict when the Chief Minister belongs to an opposition party (CM_{opp} in Model 1b) or to any party except the PM's ($CM_{not_{affil}}$in Model 2b). Model 3b confirms the hypothesis (H2) that when all three non-affiliated groups are compared with reference to the affiliated group, confrontational activity of opposition states is at both its highest magnitude and statistical significance. On the other hand, conflict seldom sparks if Chief Ministers belong to the Prime Minister's political party.

Contrary to our prediction (H1) is the finding that belonging to a non-affiliated political party did not have a significant negative effect on center–state cooperation. The lack of statistically significant correlations obtained for CM_{opp} and $CM_{not_{affil}}$ in the "a" group of models indicate that, under certain circumstances there can be center–state cooperation even when the Chief Minister belongs to a non-affiliated political party. However, the negative sign for CM_{opp} (Model 1a) indicate that cooperation on subnational governments' international engagements or foreign policy issues is less likely when there is an adversarial political relationship between the center and a particular state.

Overall, the analysis shows that while the instances of cooperation might occur irrespective of party affiliations, the episodes of center–state conflict occur more significantly when the interacting governments at the two levels are controlled by rival political parties. In such instances, different policy preferences of the center and the state(s) cannot be resolved at the party level. Since quantitative analysis cannot capture why and under what circumstances non-affiliated political parties

Table 2 Impact of Chief Minister's affiliation on state government's international action

		Frequency of subnational international action involving cooperation or lack of conflict			Incidence of center–state conflict		
		Model 1(a) $\frac{\beta\ coeff}{t-stat}$	Model 2(a) $\frac{\beta\ coeff}{t-stat}$	Model 3(a) $\frac{\beta\ coeff}{t-stat}$	Model 1(b) $\frac{\beta\ coeff}{t-stat}$	Model 2(b) $\frac{\beta\ coeff}{t-stat}$	Model 3(b) $\frac{\beta\ coeff}{t-stat}$
Per capita NSDP (log)		4.765**	4.721***	4.868***	0.313**	0.366**	0.349**
		(3.00)	(3.33)	(3.57)	(2.47)	(2.91)	(2.82)
Election Year		−0.987***	−0.976***	−0.982***	0.00	0.01	0.01
		(−5.23)	(−4.93)	(−4.93)	(0.15)	(0.15)	(0.19)
Rural Population (log)		−18.663*	−18.723*	−18.626*	0.24	0.24	0.25
		(−2.10)	(−2.08)	(−2.11)	(0.83)	(0.79)	(0.85)
CM_{opp}		−0.30			**0.094****		
		(−0.86)			(2.38)		
$CM_{not_{affil}}$			−0.05			**0.121****	
			(-0.08)			(2.99)	
CM_{affil} as Reference Group	CM_{align}			0.46			0.16
				(0.80)			(1.02)
	CM_{opp}			−0.16			**0.142*****
				(−0.26)			(3.26)
	CM_{osp}			0.15			0.05
				(0.18)			(0.87)
Constant		281.678*	283.071*	279.867*	−7.39	−7.93	−8.01
		(1.97)	(1.93)	(1.94)	(−1.35)	(−1.42)	(−1.44)
R^2		0.21	0.21	0.21	0.12	0.12	0.13
Dfres		13	13	13	13	13	13
Observations		252	252	252	252	252	252

*$p < 0.10$, **$p < 0.05$, ***$p < 0.01$.

will cooperate or oppose the central government over foreign policy issues, we undertake multiple case studies of the dynamics of intergovernmental conflict and cooperation in the next section.

India's Center–State Relations and SNG's International Engagements: Qualitative Analysis

Our qualitative analysis focuses on four different dimensions of international engagement: economic relations; security affairs and dispute resolution; the identity dimension; and diaspora politics. We deliberately omit cultural diplomacy as

relations between the center and the states in this field are far less conflictive than in "high politics" fields.

Economic Relations

The bulk of international engagement of subnational governments across the world lies in the realm of trade and investment (Requejo 2011; Sridharan 2003). In India, there is enormous regional variation in states' ability and willingness to engage in economic diplomacy. A core finding from our qualitative analysis is that states ruled by the Prime Minister's party or by an outside supporter's party get more support from the center when lobbying for foreign investments. Particularly in the field of economic paradiplomacy, Chief Ministers often directly compete amongst themselves to attract FDI and win funding from international agencies. Politically important states receive greater support and assistance by the central government.

One such case is Andhra Pradesh, which during the UPA II government was an affiliated state (2009–2013) and was promptly granted environmental clearance to set up a multipurpose irrigation project at Polavaram, regardless of environmental and human rights concerns. In contrast, in Odisha, a mineral-rich state ruled by an opposition party (Biju Janata Dal), the UPA II government stalled investments from POSCO—a South Korean steel-making company and Vedant—a British-based metal company, citing tribal rights and environmental concerns. Also, under the NDA government after 2014, the requests by the Odisha government (still controlled by the Biju Janata Dal) to expedite approvals remained unheeded, forcing the companies to walk away from investment plans in 2017. The case of Andhra Pradesh, which during the NDA government was an outside supporter (1999–2004), also reveals that outside-supporter-ruled states have particular advantages in extracting concessions from the center. During the NDA term in office, Andhra Pradesh, ruled by the Telugu Desam Party (TDP), despite having 6.9 percent of India's population, received 31 percent of all foreign aid flowing into India in the fiscal years 2000–2001 and 2002–2003 (Kirk 2011, 105). When other states became aware of the ad-hoc-ism involved, they pressed the center into standardizing the procedure of foreign aid allocation. As a result, under the Medium-Term Fiscal Reform Facility (MTFRF) scheme, state governments were required to meet a set of fiscal commitments to be eligible for external assistance. However, political favoritism still triumphed: even though Andhra Pradesh had faltered on its MTFRF commitments, the central government allowed it to receive $300 million in external assistance in 2003 to support the reform process. Meanwhile, the center objected to a $200 million structural adjustment loan from the World Bank for the opposition-party-ruled Karnataka, on the grounds that the state had not met its MTFRF commitments (see Online Appendix).

When it comes to center–state conflicts, our case studies also allow for some interesting insights. We find that the center is more tolerant of affiliated states' international engagement while all sorts of concerns are invoked to prevent opposition states' engagements. For example, our data shows that all instances of the center denying a Chief Ministers' foreign travels have been to opposition-ruled states. Interestingly, such denials have been more extensive under majority governments (nine episodes under the BJP-led government) than under coalition governments (two episodes under UPA I and II combined). Moreover, during the BJP-led government (2014–present), the center has invoked security concerns to discourage international engagements of opposition-ruled states such as West Bengal, Kerala, and Karnataka. In 2017, the Ministry of External Affairs did not issue a clearance for West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee's visit to China, on the grounds that "the time [was] not right" (see Online Appendix). Similarly, the center also denied permission to Kerala's tourism minister and Karnataka's Minister for Large and Medium Industries to visit China. This contrasts with the approach of the government towards affiliated/aligned states such as Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Gujarat, and Andhra Pradesh, whose representatives were actively encouraged to visit China and court Chinese investments during the same period of tense relations with China (see Online Appendix for the dates and the agenda of these CMs' visits to China during 2015–17).

However, just as the central government hesitates to support opposition-ruled states' favorite projects, opposition-ruled states also oppose the national government's favorite investment projects. For instance, during UPA II (2009–2014), opposition states opposed FDI in retail and nuclear power projects, while affiliated states vowed to implement these policies. Policy changes in line with changes of governments confirm that cooperation and conflict are a function of party affiliation. For instance, during the UPA rule, Congress-ruled states such as Haryana, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Rajasthan, Assam, and Delhi welcomed the policy decision to allow FDI in the retail sector. Non-Congress-ruled states, such as West Bengal, Uttar Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Bihar, Orissa, Gujarat, and Kerala decided not to implement the decision. Only one non-Congress state out of sixteen (Punjab) supported the decision and only two out of thirteen states ruled by Congress or its allies (Himachal Pradesh and Kerala) opposed the policy. Whereas all BJP-ruled states opposed FDI in retail when the UPA was in power at the center, when the BJP formed the central government, all BJP-ruled states supported the policy (see Online Appendix).

Finally, the qualitative analysis of international economic engagements revealed an additional factor that can shape SNGs' activism and sometimes contradicts our general findings: the personal involvement of not just Chief Ministers, but also of incumbent MPs (especially those with a ministerial berth at the center) who benefit from investment projects located in their own constituencies and therefore get to

play the role of "paradiplomats." For example, in January 2012, External Affairs Minister S.M. Krishna invited Sheikh Hamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) to discuss investment opportunities in his own home state, Karnataka. At that time, the Chief Minister of Karnataka, D. V. Sadananda Gowda, belonged to the opposition BJP, while Krishna represented the Congress party, the Prime Minister's party. The UAE delegation held discussions with officials belonging to both parties and committed to invest in various infrastructure development projects (see Online Appendix). Similarly, in October 2017, External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj lured foreign investors to invest in Madhya Pradesh by promising them "special benefits" due to her constituency's (Vidisha) location within the state (Zee News 2016).

These qualitative findings help us make sense of the signs as well as absence of significance for the center–state foreign policy cooperation. The negative sign for CM_{opp} in model 1a shows that the opposition states get less support from the center and *vice versa* in comparison to the states ruled by the rest of the groups (the PM's party, the coalition partners and the outside supporters), leading to fewer episodes of international activities involving cooperation or lack of conflict. However, the lack of significance arises from the fact that there are instances when the ruling party's MPs or ministers seek FDIs in their own constituencies even if they are located in opposition ruled or other non-affiliated states. Furthermore, during the coalition era, the non-affiliated Chief Ministers were as active as their affiliated counterparts in travelling overseas to attract investments. Thus, the central government does not object to the investment scouting missions of non-affiliated states per se ($CM_{not_{affil}}$). Finally, the findings confirm that the positive but non-significant coefficient for junior partners means that this group has been able to extract support at times, based on its bargaining powers (TDP during 1999-2004), but not always (CPI(M)during 2004-2009).

Security Affairs and Dispute Resolution

When it comes to security policy, the central government generally tends to refer to the national interest in order to avoid interference by state governments. However, states have some room of manoeuver to challenge the center's activities.

The most salient case in which non-affiliated states nearly brought down the central government over a foreign policy issue was India's so-called "nuclear deal" with the United States. When the UPA government initiated negotiations with Washington that culminated in the 2008 Indo-U.S. nuclear agreement, Gujarat's BJP Chief Minister criticized the deal as an assault on India's nuclear sovereignty, and several state parties followed suit. The Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) of India's most populous state, Uttar Pradesh, opposed the deal as "anti-Muslim" arguing that it was being done "at the 'cost of cheap gas' from Iran" (Economic Times

2008). The Telugu Desam Party of Andhra Pradesh rejected it as compromising India's sovereignty. However, the central government did not truly worry until after the Left Front withdrew its support to the government criticizing the UPA for succumbing to "American hegemony" (Outlook 2008).

Indian states also have had a significant bearing on the center's approach to bilateral treaties with several foreign countries. States have started asserting their participation in those foreign affairs having a direct bearing on them, especially since the mid-1990s (Basu 2016). Whereas some states routinely demand consultation and engagement in the treaty making and dispute resolution process, the center's response depends on state parties' political influence over the national ruling party or coalition.

The most prominent incident of a state interfering in the center's attempts of resolving bilateral disputes through treaty-making concerns the case of India–Bangladesh water sharing. In 1996, the United Front (coalition) government at the center actively sought the West Bengal CM, Jyoti Basu's support in finding a permanent solution to the problem (Pandey 2012). In 1996, Basu undertook a five-day visit to Bangladesh to resolve the dispute over water sharing of the river Ganga that flows from India to Bangladesh. Hence, the center granted full authority to the 'affiliated' CM to lead Indo-Bangladesh talks on Ganga water sharing. This approach was successful and led to the signing of the Ganga water agreement in 1996 (Pandey 2012).

By contrast, the center held only half-hearted discussions with an outside-supporter party's Chief Minister on the similarly pressing issue around the sharing of water of the Teesta river between India and Bangladesh a decade later. When the political status of West Bengal's Chief Minister changed from affiliated (1996-98) to outside-supporter during the UPA I rule at the center (2004–2009), the government deputed then-Finance Minister Pranab Mukherjee to simply discuss the Teesta accord proposal prepared by the central government with West Bengal's then-Chief Minister Buddhadeb Bhattacharya (CPI-M). No further progress was made between 2009 and 2011.

However, even under a coalition party's Chief Minister, center–state cooperation is not guaranteed, if the center is not willing to fully engage with the state. For instance, with a coalition party's Chief Minister in power in West Bengal, the central government revised the Teesta water sharing accord without consulting the CM, Mamata Banerjee (see Online Appendix). Since the agreement had allegedly been changed without her consent, Banerjee decided not to accompany the PM on that trip; the deal was aborted with Banerjee threatening to withdraw her party's participation in the national coalition. Since then a solution to the problem of Teesta water sharing continues to elude both India and Bangladesh.

Another case that illustrates the role of the Indian states in the high-politics areas is the Land Boundary Agreement between India and Bangladesh. The

landmark India-Bangladesh accord—signed during Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's trip to Dhaka in 2011—was opposed by the Chief Minister of West Bangal, Mamata Banerjee, whose party Trinamool Congress (TMC) was a coalition partner of the UPA government. She claimed that the proposed demarcation of land boundaries was done without consulting either local people or herself, as Chief Minister. In 2013, when the central government made an attempt at passage of the Land Boundary Agreement (LBA) Bill in the upper house, the TMC MPs stalled the bill—having already broken ties with the UPA government in September 2012.

After 2014, with the BJP having comfortable majority in the lower house and the Congress party already being in the favor of the LBA, it was clear to Banerjee that the bill would be passed in the parliament without much difficulty. Thus, instead of obstructing it, she focused on getting the maximum financial benefits out of the deal: she negotiated a package of Rs. 3,008 crore ($423.4 million) from the BJP government for infrastructure development and extended her support to the bill, citing local support for the agreement as the key reason (see Online Appendix).

These cases reveal the multiple forms that center–state interactions can take over foreign policy issues. In the high-politics areas of security affairs and dispute resolution, whether states' sensitivities will undermine cooperation with the center will be a function of political cost-benefit analyses on the part of the state governments. State governments value their relationship with local voters as much as they seek power as coalition partners, and sometimes they can get sandwiched between pressures from below (local people) and from above (national government). Which way the state government will go is a function of political expediency. There are instances of both. Mamata Banerjee opposed the water sharing agreement in 2011 despite being a coalition partner. At the same time, the Land Boundary Agreement indicates the extent to which states' positioning toward international treaty-making depends on their political relationship towards the center.

The Identity Dimension

Identity politics becomes a foreign policy issue for SNGs when they share ethnic identities with certain groups in foreign countries. In such cases, if there are several regionalist parties, they might end up competing amongst themselves to capitalize on these issues.

The most salient of such cases is that of Tamil Nadu's impact on India's policies vis-à-vis Sri Lanka. In Tamil Nadu, two regional parties—the AIADMK and the DMK—routinely politicize the electorate's regional Tamil identity in their competition for power. Consequently, the fate of the Tamil minority in neighboring Sri Lanka has been a major issue of political debate. However, even in

this case the positions taken by regional parties and the central government's policy decisions are largely determined by center–state political relations.

Already in 1991, the AIADMK, which together with the Congress was an outside supporter of the central government of Chandra Shekhar, managed to induce the central government to dismiss Tamil Nadu's DMK government and to impose President's rule on the state. The reason given was that the DMK state government in Tamil Nadu was conniving with the separatist Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) to carry out clandestine activities (Ramakrishnan 2016). Similar allegations and attempts by the AIADMK to dismiss a DMK state government between 1996 and 2001, by contrast, failed because the DMK was a coalition partner in successive central governments (both the United Front in 1996–1998 and the NDA in 1999–2004). The final years of the civil war in Sri Lanka confirm the patterns of center–state cooperation. Starting from July 2006, the Sri Lankan government launched a brutal military offensive against the LTTE, and ultimately defeated the rebels militarily in 2009, amid massive human rights violations. Throughout these years, the DMK was in power in Tamil Nadu (2006–2011) and a coalition partner in the ruling UPA government. Despite being sympathetic to the LTTE's cause, the DMK did not seriously undermine New Delhi's policy of quiet support of the Sri Lankan government's military offensive (Destradi 2012). In contrast, Jayaram Jayalalitha, the AIADMK opposition leader, desperate for a comeback as Chief Minister, vocally condemned Sri Lanka's military operations (Ramakrishnan 2016).

After the end of Sri Lanka's civil war, the issue of investigating the Sri Lankan government's war crimes came center stage. Both the AIADMK and the DMK competed with one another in demonstrating concern for Sri Lankan Tamils. And indeed, when the DMK was a coalition partner at the center, it managed to stop Prime Minister Manmohan Singh from participating in a Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in Colombo as a sign of condemnation of the Sri Lankan government. Yet such concessions by the central government were not sufficient in the DMK's eyes, which ultimately pulled out of the UPA II coalition over the issue of calling for an international investigation and condemning Sri Lanka's crimes as "genocide" in a UNHRC resolution. The DMK alleged that the central government had instead worked to water down the US-backed resolution. In March 2014, freed from the pressure of its former coalition partner, the government of India decided to abstain from voting on the resolution (see Online Appendix).

The Diaspora Dimension

After independence, and as an extension of the principle of non-interference, New Delhi adopted a policy of not encouraging Indian diaspora to engage either with India as a whole or their Indian states of origin (Varadarajan 2010). However, against the backdrop of economic liberalization and the rise of regional parties,

Indian states with a large number of people living in other countries have begun actively engaging the Indian diaspora abroad. Moreover, with the first BJP-led government from 1998 onwards, the center has become more attentive to diaspora politics (Jaffrelot and Therwath 2007, 293). Overall, in this domain center–state conflict is rare. Yet, as PM Modi has intensified and formalized his relation with the diaspora (addressing diaspora forums has become a quasi-mandatory element in his travels abroad) the two levels may compete in addressing issues pertaining to the diaspora—and their competition tends to follow the patterns identified for the other issue areas.

Take the example of the state of Kerala—the largest exporter of manpower to Gulf countries. In 2004, when the UPA government at the center was a multi-party coalition supported from outside by leftist parties, the government of Kerala suggested the creation of a Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs, a request that was heeded. The fact that the Prime Minister and the Chief Minister of Kerala shared the same political party affiliation at that time played a key role in that success. By 2014, however, the BJP-majority government, the most attentive Indian government to diaspora politics since independence (Raja and Chauhan 2015), decided to merge the Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs with the Ministry of External Affairs. The Kerala government, now under opposition-party rule, protested against that step (The Times of India 2016).

Also, in other, more specific instances of diaspora politics, the political affiliation of central and state governments played a role. For example, in 2012, Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot wrote to External Affairs Minister S. M. Krishna seeking his intervention for the expeditious release of Indians arrested in Kuwait for alleged visa violations. Both Gehlot and Krishna belonged to the same political party, so the needful was done without any of the two resorting to competing claims. However, when the matter regarding the release of Keralite prisoners from Sharjah jails in the UAE arose in 2017, the Chief Minister of Kerala did not seek any help from the center; rather, he himself invited Sharjah's ruler, Sultan bin Mohammed Al-Qasimi, for a visit to Kerala. The Minister of External Affairs was involved only when the Sultan announced the release. The minister immediately tweeted the news of the 149 prisoners released from Sharjah jails, but did not mention the significant role played by the opposition party Chief Minister of Kerala (See online appendix).

Conclusion

This systematic and comprehensive study of subnational governments' international engagements in India since the mid-1990s revealed that India's states, like subnational governments elsewhere, are undergoing a process of transformation

and internationalization, as illustrated in the continuous increase in state's foreign engagements from 1995 to 2017.

Our quantitative analysis also exposed that party affiliation matters more in foreign policy issues involving center–state spats than in issues on which there is no clash of interests. Overall, on controversial issues, states ruled by parties affiliated with the ruling party in New Delhi follow the center's foreign policy stance. These are in turn the states that receive relatively more support from the center, for instance in matters of attracting foreign aid or investments. By contrast, the non-affiliated states—opposition states in particular—tend to take adversarial positions on controversial issues and receive less support from the center. The qualitative assessment of states' international engagements has broadly confirmed the findings of the quantitative analysis and has helped us identify some of the underlying mechanisms and add nuance to our findings.

These insights from the case of India contribute to advancing our general understanding of subnational diplomacy in various ways. First, they show to what extent paradiplomacy is deeply political. Often, paradiplomacy is characterized as a pragmatic, hands-on approach to international engagements (e.g., Barber 2013), in which states and cities pursue concrete economic goals such as attracting FDI—largely detached from diplomatic intricacies, power games, and more generally "high politics". Our findings confirm this expectation to the extent that the largest part of Indian paradiplomacy is economically motivated. Yet, our analysis also revealed that in India's vividly democratic federal polity, paradiplomacy is highly politicized. States' foreign engagements are determined almost as much as by the contingent power configuration in their relationship with the center as by their economic needs or paradiplomatic capabilities.

Second, and relatedly, our findings speak to inside-out approaches in foreign policy analysis. The steady increase of paradiplomatic activities (figures 1 and 2) even beyond the coalition era in Indian politics supports the view that in many foreign policy fields domestic factors (coalition politics, the rise of regional parties, etc.) dominate external ones (as outside-in approaches would have it). Yet, this is not heralding a new era of "constituent diplomacy" where subnational states co-formulate foreign policy on par with the center (Kincaid 1990). Instead, evidence provided in this article suggests that paradiplomacy, while getting increasingly important and even extremely relevant in some cases, remains circumscribed by party political relations between the center and the states. As a consequence, in large federations with vivid democratic contests both at the central and state levels, paradiplomacy—its impact and extent—is highly contingent, set to change over time and hard to predict.

Third, the findings from our qualitative analysis reveal that subnational identity politics is a major force in paradiplomacy. Its impact can go so far as to capture a nation state's diplomatic relations—as in the case of Tamil Nadu's political parties'

competition over solidarity with the Tamil minority in Sri Lanka. Further research on paradiplomacy should delve deeper into such identity component, asking under what conditions identity matters most in shaping paradiplomacy and engaging more closely with diaspora studies.

Finally, the Indian case draws our attention to the fact that the interests and capabilities of subnational units as well as individual leadership play a role in shaping the extent to which states engage in paradiplomacy. Only a few Indian states like Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu are particularly active. These insights open up a range of avenues for further research, which include explaining different intensities in center–state collaboration/conflict on paradiplomacy; more carefully differentiating among subnational units; and systematically assessing to what extent political leadership has a distinct impact on center–state interactions. A further dialogue between the comparative federalism and the foreign policy analysis literatures will be helpful in this regard. Overall, the Indian case shows the extent to which paradiplomacy merges domestic and international politics, with domestic rationales typically trumping international considerations both at the center and in subnational states.

Supplementary Data

Supplementary data are available at *Publius: The Journal of Federalism* online.

Notes

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1. Research shows considerable evidence for political and administrative centralization since the 2014 general elections (Sharma and Swenden 2018).
2. Also, see Salómon (2012) for an account of the boom in paradiplomacy amongst PT-governed states and municipalities in Brazil following the PT's national electoral victory in 2003.
3. Current debates on Western countries expand the traditional left-right cleavage to one between green/alternative/libertarian (GAL) versus traditional/authoritarian/nationalist (TAN) parties (Hooghe and Marks 2018).

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